North Western	8744	Southern	7922
South Central	10919	South Eastern	11888
South East Central	8893	South Western	7363
Western	10124	West Central	7830

(b) Action for filling of vacancies is a continuous process. Vacancies are filled primarily through open market recruitment, which is done through Railway Recruitment Boards or by the Zonal Railways themselves. Other vacancies in the promotional grade are however filled through departmental promotions.

(c) No, Sir.

Freight trains running with high axle load

84. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Comptroller and Auditor General has pulled up Railways for permitting freight trains to run with higher axle loads endangering the safety of the rolling stock, bridges and tracks, this had led to increasing cases of spring failure, buffer coupler failures and wagon body damage and permitting load increase by six-to-eight tonnes for coal and iron-ore would have an adverse impact on tracks, bridges and rolling stock;

(b) what are the other main points pointed by the CAG; and

(c) the-steps taken and also suggestions considered?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Chapter I-Freight and Wagon Management on Indian Railways of CAG's (Comptroller and Auditor General's) Report No. 6 of 2007, in which CAG has commented upon the running of freight trains with higher axle loads, has been selected for examination by Public Accounts Committee of Parliament. The chapter is concerned, not only with higher axle loads but various other aspects of Freight and Wagon Management on Indian Railways. The Recommendation of CAG with regard to "Impact of CC (Carrying Capacity) Enhancement" is as under:

"Since loading of wagons beyond permitted axle load limits is likely to damage rolling stock as well as track, Railways should take urgent steps to complete the installation of weigh bridges at all the loading points and strengthening the monitoring mechanism as envisaged. Since the increase in permissible axle load reduces and leeway available, no overloading whatsoever should be permitted as this would have serious impact on track."

(c) Inputs such as Ultra Sonic Flaw Detection (USFD), Wheel Impact Load Detector (WILD), bridg instrumentation etc. and maintenance requirements are being provided as per requirements for higher axle load operation. Indian Railways have installed 106 Electronic-in-motion weighbridges (as on July, 2007) to check the wagons for overloading, if any, for protection of wagons.

Detailed comments of the Ministry of Railways on all aspects contained in this chapter have since been furnished to the Lok Sabha Secretariat for submission before the Public Accounts Committee. The PAC have also desired to have oral evidence of Railway Board on matter contained in this chapter. The oral evidence has, however, not been held so far. As per the laid down procedure, after examination of this matter by PAC and after submission of

report by PAC to the Parliament, Action Taken Note will be finalized by Ministry of Railways as per recommendations of the Committee.

Route network of Railways in Andhra Pradesh

85. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the route network of railways in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) the present position thereof;

(c) what steps Government have taken to lay new route networks especially in Andhra Pradesh during the last three years; and

(d) what are the new additional routes to come during the current year in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) The rail route kilometres in Andhra Pradesh as on 31.03.2006 (latest available) is 5185 kilometres consisting of 4856 Broad Gauge and 329 Metre Gauge route.

(c) and (d) During last 3 years, Manoharabad-Kotipalli (148.9 Kilometres), Jaggayapet— Mallacheruvu (19.1 Kilometres), Vishnupuram—Janapahar (11 Kilometres) and Obulavaripalle— Krishnapatnam (113 Kilometres) new line projects, falling fully/partly in the State of Andhra Pradesh, have been taken up and rayadurg-Tumkur (213 Kilometres) new line project has been included in the Budget 2007-08. Rs. 200 crore was allocated for ongoing new line projects in Andhra Pradesh during last 3 years.

During last 3 years, Kakinada-Kotipalli (44 Kilometres) and Karimnagar-Jagtiyal (48 Kilometres) new lines have been completed and Nandyal-S. Uppalapadu (42 Kilometres) segment of Nandyal—Yerraguntla (126 Kilometres) is targeted for completion during the current year.

Increasing steel prices

86. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the steel prices are rising and are not reachable to the common man;

(b) if so, the prices of steel during the last 3 years, year-wise;

(c) the reasons for such increase;

(d) whether it is also a fact that the producers pass the increase in prices to consumers saying that they have no control over the rise in input prices; and

(e) if so, the steps being taken to rectify the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) Yes, Sir. Steel prices in the retail market have moved up by 2.6 to 12.4% during the three-year period from October 2004 to October 2007. However, to address the need of common man, Ministry of Steel has taken conscious effort in improving the distribution system of steel items of common use, by expanding the dealer network of the Public sector Steel Companies. As on date, Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) has 1287 dealers covering 602 districts in the country while Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL) has appointed 131 district level dealers to cater to' the requirements of small consumers.

(b) Month-wise retail price data for Mumbai retail market during the last three years, on selected steel items is given in the enclosed Statement *(See* below).